

Centennial History of
Pleasant Grove Methodist Church
1838-1938

Clarence W. Griffin

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CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF PLEASANT GROVE METHODIST CHURCH

1838 — 1938

Compiled By
CLARENCE W. GRIFFIN
County Historian, Rutherford County
Member North Carolina Historical Commission

Published By
PLEASANT GROVE CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

MISS KATE MOORE, Chairman
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D. C. COLE CLARENCE M. BUTLER
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DESIGNED AND PRINTED BY

THE FOREST CITY COURIER

JOB DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

It is very significant that this narrative of a century of Methodism should be presented at this particular time. Pleasant Grove's Centennial year coincides with one of Methodism's greatest events. In May, 1738, John Wesley, attending a humble meeting in Aldersgate street in London, was converted, an event that doubtless attracted but scant attention at the moment, but one that was destined to move a world and revive a formal and dying Christianity. One hundred years later, Pleasant Grove was founded, another event that was of only momentary interest. But the passing years have proven both events to have been of momentous importance; one of a world-wide scope, another on almost a state-wide scale. Pleasant Grove has exerted a tremendous influence within the councils of the church in Western North Carolina—an influence entirely out of proportion to its numerical membership. She is truly the mother of Methodism in this particular section. Five generations of Rutherford county folk have left her sacred portals to carry the banner of Methodism from the Catawba across the Blue Ridge. Hundreds of Pleasant Grove members have made of religion a real, vitalizing factor in their daily lives and in their communities.

This pamphlet is presented with the hope that it will serve the purpose of preserving for posterity some of the names of the founders of this church. The deplorable lack of official church records makes the task almost an impossibility. We can only catch glimpses of these staunch pillars of the church now and then through the shadowy lights of legend and oral recital, and leave conjecture to fill the spaces in their careers.

The compiler of this pamphlet has a particular interest in Pleasant Grove and its glorious history. Although not now a member of this church, he is the fourth generation of his family who have held membership here. His great-grandparents, the Hon. William L. Griffin and wife, Elizabeth (Suttle) Griffin, were charter members, joining in 1838. His grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Loren W. Griffin, were likewise members here. His father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Griffin, and the compiler have held membership here. And with that record, there are others today who are the fifth and sixth generations of their families who have continuously held membership at Pleasant Grove.

CLARENCE W. GRIFFIN

Forest City, N. C.

April 22, 1938

P69077

LOCATION OF CHURCH

Pleasant Grove Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the subject of this sketch, is located one mile west of Forest City, North Carolina, in Rutherford County, and on U. S. Highway No. 74 (Charlotte to Asheville).



PREFACE

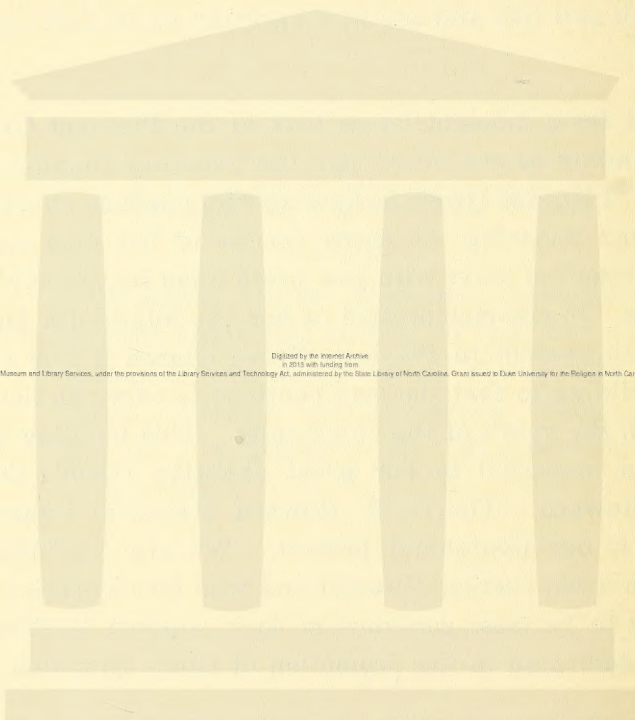
The members and the pastor of Pleasant Grove church are deeply indebted to Clarence W. Griffin for the preparation of this most interesting Centennial History of our church. As you turn through the pages of this pamphlet the interesting past of a hundred years will arise and live again in your minds. These beloved founders and leaders in the growth of this grand old church still live and are now carrying on in God's greater life.

Just for a moment let us look at the Pleasant Grove of today standing as she does upon the generous foundations of the past. Pleasant Grove is now an independent church supporting and receiving the entire service of her own minister. The congregation looks with just pride upon its splendid brick parsonage. In commemoration of her one hundredth birthday we wish to present to Pleasant Grove church a fine Church School building so that she may continue to carry on her great work with the youth of the community. This building will be built as a memorial to our great christian friend, the late Guy B. Howard. The G. B. Howard Memorial Educational Building is our Centennial project. We are confident that those who loved brother Howard and who love Pleasant Grove are going to be most generous in their support of this cause which is dedicated to the promotion of God's Kingdom in our midst.

May we stand in reverence of the sacred past, labor together with our God in the living present, and with a radiant faith in the Kingdom of Christ look confidently into the years ahead. Thus Pleasant Grove shall continue to go forward.

R. G. TUTTLE, Pastor

Forest City, N. C.
April 25, 1938



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BEGINNING OF METHODISM

Representatives of the Quakers and The Church of England, or Established Church, were the first to attempt religious work in North Carolina. They were followed soon afterwards by the Baptists. This denomination had four churches in the State in 1755. Presbyterianism was introduced into North Carolina with the coming of the Scotch-Irish in 1736-60, and by 1768 they had three or four congregations in the State.

The organization of American Methodism and that of the United States government were practically coincident. Ministers of that denomination penetrated the wilds of North Carolina as early as 1772, and one congregation was organized two years later. In 1776 there was reported nearly 700 Methodists in the State.

Up to 1800 there was marked religious development in Rutherford county, considering its remoteness and unsettled condition. Within the present bounds of Rutherford county there were, at the close of the century one Presbyterian church, two Baptist churches and one Methodist church, a total of four churches, or if Hopewell Methodist church is considered, which was organized in 1800, there were five churches, serving the scattered population of the county.

Brittain church was organized in 1768. Bills Creek Baptist church was next organized, in 1785, followed in 1787 by the organization of Mountain Creek Baptist church. Oak Grove Methodist church was organized in 1792, and Hopewell Methodist church in 1800. Pisgah and Wesley's Chapel Methodist churches were organized two years later, in 1802. Wesley's Chapel was first called Walnut Grove. These seven churches might well be called the mothers of their respective denominations in Rutherford county and Western North Carolina.

Methodism was probably introduced into the section west of the Catawba river as early as 1780. The Yadkin circuit at that time possibly embraced all the territory from the headwaters of the Dan and Uwharrie rivers westward to the French Broad and Nolichucky, so there was very little organization, if any, west of the Catawba prior to 1787, on account of the large circuit. R. J. Miller had been sent in 1786 as a missionary to occupy this territory and to form a circuit in the County of Lincoln; but coming into this section he found a large number of Germans and began to act as their pastor, and did no active work as a Methodist.

Daniel Asbury, with the assistance of John McGee in 1789, and Jessie Richardson in 1790, were sent to form the Lincoln circuit, which embraced Lincoln, Rutherford and Burke with portions of Mecklenburg and Cabarrus counties in North Carolina, and York district in South Caro-

lina, and that portion of the Spartanburg and Union districts which lie north of the Pacolet river. It took the name of Union circuit in 1793, which was retained until 1805, when it was again called Lincoln, and later Rutherfordton.

In 1787 a number of Methodists from Virginia moved into Lincoln county and settled on the Catawba river. When Daniel Asbury and John McGee entered upon their work of forming the Lincoln circuit they went first to a colony of Methodists and organized a church. For two years they worshipped in a grove, or private homes, but in 1791 they erected a building which was the first Methodist church in the State west of the Catawba river. This was Rehobeth church. It was a small log house, with a shed on one side for the colored people. The present building is the third to be erected at that place; it was erected in 1891, just one hundred years after the first one was built.

* In 1794 the leading male members of the church consulted together and agreed to hold a camp meeting for a number of days and nights. The meeting was accordingly appointed and conducted by Daniel Asbury, assisted by three others. The success of the camp meeting led to the appointment of another the following year. By 1800 the idea had spread over nearly all of North Carolina. The first camp meeting held in Rutherford county was in 1802 "about eight miles from the court house." Rev. James Jenkins says: "The same power attended this meeting; thousands were present, many poor sinners felt the power of God and were raised up to testify that he had forgiven their sins." Thomas L. Douglas, Daniel Asbury and several Presbyterian ministers assisted in this meeting.

Prior to this Bishop Asbury traveled over the circuit and preached at many points. During his itinerary he preached on two or three occasions in Rutherford county.

Within the next few years camp meetings were held annually in nearly every circuit in the State. Many of them have long since been discontinued, but Lincoln county still holds her summer encampments and thousands attend from many states.

In the early days of Methodism these camp meetings brought together large congregations and helped to concentrate public thought on religion. The results achieved could not have been had from any other method, from the fact that the country was so sparsely settled. These encampments did more for the enlarging and building the denomination than anything else since that time.

In 1790 the Lincoln circuit appears in the list of appointments with Daniel Asbury and Jessie Richardson as pastors. Enoch George was an

assistant to Asbury but his name does not appear. The circuit had finally been formed, but not without enduring many hardships and persecutions. The early minister had to climb some of the most stupendous mountains in America; descend valleys, swim rivers, wade through mud and find his way through pathless, unmarked forests of Western North Carolina. He had to preach to mountaineers, a people confirmed in the principles of Calvinism, the very hardest cases in the catalog of sinners. Many of the people regarded not only the Methodist minister, but all preachers, as intruders, and they met hostility on every hand. An incident occurring in this county in 1789 will show something of the opposition and persecution met. A ruffian band seized Daniel Asbury and hurried him to trial before Jonathan Hampton, a justice of the peace and a gentleman of intelligence, at Gilberttown. "What crime has been committed by Mr. Asbury," asked the magistrate, "that you have thus arrested him and brought him in the presence of an officer of the law?" "He is going about everywhere through the country preaching and he has no authority to do so. We believe he is nothing but an imposter and we have brought him before you that you may do something with him and forbid him to preach any more in the future," responded the leader for the rest. "Why, does he make the people who go to hear him preach any worse than they were before?" further asked the magistrate. "We don't know what he does," was the answer, "but he ought not to preach." "Well," replied the magistrate, "if he makes people no worse, the probability is he makes them better; so I will release him and let him try it again."

Bishop Asbury made this entry in his diary in 1795, regarding this section of the Lincoln circuit: "My body is weak and so is my faith for this part of the vineyard . . . This country improves in cultivation, wickedness, stills and mills; a prophet of strong drink would be more acceptable to many of these people."

Despite Bishop Asbury's gloomy views, the Lincoln circuit was rapidly growing in numbers since its formation, for in 1792 four hundred and fifty-three white and thirty-nine colored members were reported.

The Catawba, Cherokee and Creek Indians were skulking along the rivers and in the mountain coves watching the encroachments of the "pale-face" men. The settlers often carried their rifles ready to protect against the wild beasts and prowling savages. In this region the minister of the gospel hunted up the hardy settlers in their forest homes and proclaimed the gospel to groups of wondering hearts.

PLEASANT GROVE

Pleasant Grove Methodist church had its inception in 1838, just one hundred years after John Wesley's revitalizing experience in Aldersgate Street in London. As we observe the bicentennary of Wesley's conversion, which revived a dying Christianity and resulted in the founding of Methodism, it is appropriate that we observe the centenary of the founding of Pleasant Grove.

From Wesley's experience came Methodism. From Pleasant Grove Methodism spread out over Rutherford county and Western North Carolina, and this venerable church may well be called the "Mother of Methodism" in this section, just as Wesley was the father of a world-wide Christian order.

Little is known of the actual founding of Pleasant Grove. Dr. Philip Grose, a native of Germany, settled about 1790 in Lincoln county, coming to that section with the hordes of German immigrants from that section around Gettysburg, Pa. He resided in Lincolnton several years, and on January 9, 1811, he married Miss Priscilla Robinson. Dr. Grose, in common with the other German settlers, was an adherent of German Lutheran church. A few years after his marriage he removed to Rutherford county, selected a home site about one mile south of where Pleasant Grove now stands, and built a large, commodious two-story home. The old house is still standing, although dilapidated and weather-worn, being one of the oldest homes in Cool Springs township.

Dr. Grose, a practicing physician, amassed considerable property, consisting principally of real estate and slaves. He was widely known and beloved as a physician and a good neighbor.

Dr. Grose's wife was a Methodist. She noted the need of a local Methodist church in this section, which was not served by a church of any denomination. At her urging, Dr. Grose bought a plot of ground from John Rogers and with his slaves the first church building was erected. It was a large, one-room pine log structure, the logs being hewn from large forest pines, cut from the heavily-timbered tract on which the church was erected. The building stood on approximately the same site as the present church.

Pleasant Grove was for many years a part of the Rutherfordton circuit, which was included in the South Carolina Conference until 1870.

In the early days the circuit rider was unable to make more than three or four rounds each year, and local pastors or supplies, filled the pulpit instead. Each church in the charge had in nearly every instance one supply and sometimes as many as three or four local preachers. From this group of local preachers and supplies were many who later themselves became ministers of the gospel. In fact, this group furnished the sole recruiting agency for filling the ministerial ranks, since there were few

educational qualifications for the ministry. Those called to preach first began as local ministers or supplies.

After the establishment of the first church at Pleasant Grove in 1838 the membership grew rapidly from a few members to a large congregation within a few years.

Following the example set by the Presbyterians, the church for many years served a dual purpose—that of furnishing to its members educational facilities as well as religious education. The members frequently brought their spelling books, arithmetics and slates to church with them, and in this manner many were taught their three “R’s.” These classes were prevalent in the summer months, since the church had no fireplace inside. During the winter months a large bon-fire was lighted outside. The members would warm by this blaze and then go inside for the preaching services.

When founded, Pleasant Grove was a member of the Rutherfordton circuit, Lincoln district of the South Carolina Conference. The Rutherfordton circuit was transferred to the Shelby district of the South Carolina district in 1859. In 1870 the remaining portion of North Carolina, included in the South Carolina Conference, was transferred to the North Carolina Conference. Twenty years later the Western North Carolina Conference was formed. Pleasant Grove was then a member of the Morganton district, and so remained until 1917 when she was transferred to the Marion district.

LIST OF PASTORS

The following is a list of pastors of the Pleasant Grove Methodist church, including presiding elders of the district of which the church was a constituent member:

- 1838—Abel Hoyle, pastor; _____ presiding elder.
1839—Campbell Smith, pastor; _____ presiding elder.
1840—_____ pastor; _____ presiding elder.
1841—Archibald B. McGilvary, pastor; _____ presiding elder.
1842—_____ pastor; W. A. Gamewell, presiding elder.
1843—_____ pastor; W. A. Gamewell, presiding elder.
1844—W. A. McSwain, pastor; W. A. Gamewell, presiding elder.
1845—W. A. McSwain, pastor; W. A. Gamewell, presiding elder; Campbell Smith, supply; Jesse Sullans, local preacher.
1846—D. G. McDaniel, pastor; W. A. Gamewell, presiding elder; Campbell Smith, supply; Jesse Sullans, James Arthur, Carter Burnett, John Koone, E. L. Stephens, local preachers.
1847—John A. Porter, pastor; A. M. Shipp, presiding elder; Campbell Smith, supply; James Arthur, Carter Burnett, John Koone, L. Wood, local preachers.
1848—A. H. Richardson, pastor; A. M. Foster, presiding elder; Abner Erwin, junior pastor; C. Smith, supply; L. Wood, Carter Burnett, local preachers.
1849—S. D. Lang, pastor; A. M. Foster, presiding elder; C. Burnett, L. Wood, J. T. Miller, I. W. Vandine, local preachers.

- 1850—J. R. Pickett, pastor; A. M. Foster, presiding elder; A. M. Rush, junior pastor; I. W. Vandine, J. T. Miller, local preachers.
- 1851—P. F. Kistler, pastor; H. H. Durrant, presiding elder; I. W. Vandine, J. T. Miller, local preachers.
- 1852—P. F. Kistler, pastor; H. H. Durrant, presiding elder; D. May, junior pastor; I. W. Vandine, J. T. Miller, H. Haynes, local preachers.
- 1853—J. H. Robinson, pastor; H. H. Durrant, presiding elder; I. W. Vandine, J. T. Miller, H. Haynes, local preachers.
- 1854—J. H. Robinson, pastor; H. H. Durrant, presiding elder; G. H. Wells, junior pastor; J. T. Miller, local preacher; C. Smith, supply.
- 1855—R. P. Franks, pastor; J. W. Kelly, presiding elder; G. R. Andrews, junior pastor; C. H. Wells, local preacher.
- 1856—P. F. Kistler, pastor; J. W. Kelly, presiding elder; J. Holmes, assistant pastor; G. H. Wells, local preacher.
- 1857—P. F. Kistler, pastor; J. W. Kelly, presiding elder; G. H. Wells, local preacher.
- 1858—Abner Erwin, pastor; J. W. Kelly, presiding elder; W. Bowman, junior pastor.
- 1859—J. S. Nelson, pastor; H. C. Parsons, presiding elder; J. D. Carpenter, local preacher.
- 1860—J. S. Ervin, pastor; H. A. C. Walker, presiding elder; J. D. Carpenter, N. K. Melton, A. Hamby, G. W. Humbert, local preachers.
- 1861—J. S. Ervin, pastor; H. A. C. Walker, presiding elder; Allen Hamby, local preacher.
- 1862—W. W. Jones, pastor; H. A. C. Walker, presiding elder; Allen Hamby, local preacher.
- 1863—W. W. Jones, pastor; W. H. Fleming, presiding elder; Allen Hamby, local preacher.
- 1864—Jas. S. Ervin, pastor; W. H. Fleming, presiding elder; Allen Hamby, local preacher.
- 1865—Jas. S. Ervin, pastor; W. H. Fleming, presiding elder; Allen Hamby, L. C. White, H. Lomas, local preachers.
- 1866—Daniel May, pastor; W. H. Fleming, presiding elder; J. P. DePass, assistant pastor.
- 1867—Daniel May, pastor; R. P. Franks, presiding elder; A. Hamby, local preacher; L. C. White, local missionary.
- 1868—V. A. Sharpe, pastor; R. P. Franks, presiding elder; A. M. Long, local preacher; D. May, supernumerary; L. C. White, missionary.
- 1869—V. A. Sharpe, pastor; R. P. Franks, presiding elder; C. Burnett, A. M. Long, local preachers; L. C. White, missionary.
- 1870—V. A. Sharpe, pastor; R. P. Franks, presiding elder; T. P. England, junior pastor; C. Burnett, J. P. DePass, A. M. Long, local preachers.
- 1871—V. A. Sharpe, pastor; E. W. Thompson, presiding elder; J. P. DePass, local preacher; T. P. England, junior pastor; Carter Burnett, D. H. Stimpson, Columbus Mission.

- 1872—W. D. Lee, pastor; E. W. Thompson, presiding elder; Carter Burnett, local preacher; D. H. Stimpson, Columbus Mission.
- 1873—W. D. Lee, pastor; Samuel Learde, presiding elder; W. W. Womack, Columbus Mission.
- 1874—Samuel Learde, pastor; L. S. Burkhead, presiding elder; Carter Burnett, local preacher; Edwin Howland, Columbus Mission.
- 1875—Samuel Learde, pastor; L. S. Burkhead, presiding elder; C. Burnett, J. B. Carpenter, N. S. Norton, Columbus Mission; J. T. Littlejohn, L. P. Columbus Mission.
- 1876—Samuel Learde, pastor; R. G. Barrett, presiding elder; C. Burnett, J. B. Carpenter, Columbus Mission, J. T. Littlejohn, Columbus Mission.
- 1877—G. F. Rounds, pastor; R. G. Barrett, presiding elder; C. Burnett, local preacher.
- 1878—G. F. Rounds, pastor; J. S. Nelson, presiding elder; C. Burnett, local preacher.
- 1879—R. F. Bumpass, pastor; J. S. Nelson, presiding elder; C. Burnett, local preacher.
- 1880—R. F. Bumpass, pastor; J. S. Nelson, presiding elder; C. Burnett,
- 1881—J. C. Hartsell, pastor; H. T. Hudson, presiding elder; S. M. Davis, assistant pastor.
- 1882—G. W. Ivey, pastor; H. T. Hudson, presiding elder; C. Burnett, local preacher.
- 1883—J. T. Abernathy, pastor; H. T. Hudson, presiding elder.
- 1884—J. T. Abernathy, pastor; H. T. Hudson, presiding elder; C. Burnett, local preacher.
- 1885—T. J. Dailey, pastor; M. L. Wood, presiding elder; C. Burnett, local preacher.
- 1886—T. J. Dailey, pastor; M. L. Wood, presiding elder; C. Burnett, local preacher.
- 1887—D. A. Watkins, pastor; M. L. Wood, presiding elder.
- 1888—G. B. Perry, pastor; Jno. R. Brooks, presiding elder.
- 1889—C. G. Little, pastor; Jno. R. Brooks, presiding elder.
- 1890 to 1899—Names of pastors not immediately available.
- 1899-1900—W. LeGette, pastor; C. G. Little, presiding elder.
- 1900-1902—L. L. Smith, pastor; C. G. Little, presiding elder.
- 1902-1903—L. L. Smith, pastor; T. E. Wagg, presiding elder.
- 1903-1905—W. O. Goode, pastor; J. H. West, presiding elder.
- 1905-1906—W. E. Abernethy, pastor; J. H. West, presiding elder.
- 1906-1907—A. R. Surratt, pastor; J. H. West, presiding elder.
- 1907-1908—J. C. Mock, pastor; C. F. Sherrill, presiding elder .
- 1908-1909—J. C. Mock, pastor; R. M. Hoyle, presiding elder.
- 1909-1912—J. F. Moser, pastor; R. M. Hoyle, presiding elder.
- 1912-1913—J. F. Moser, pastor; J. E. Gay, presiding elder.

1913-1916—J. A. Bowles, pastor; J. E. Gay, presiding elder.
1916-1917—J. A. Bowles, pastor; Parker Holmes, presiding elder.
1917-1918—W. T. Albright, pastor; Parker Holmes, presiding elder.
1918-1920—W. L. Dawson, pastor; Parker Holmes, presiding elder.
1920-1921—Parker Holmes, pastor; D. M. Litaker, presiding elder.
1921-1924—Parker Holmes, pastor; Z. Paris, presiding elder.
1924-1925—W. R. Ware, pastor; Z. Paris, presiding elder.
1925-1926—W. R. Ware, pastor; E. O. Cole, presiding elder.
1926-1929—J. B. Tabor, Jr., pastor; E. O. Cole, presiding elder.
1929-1931—W. A. Barber, pastor; E. W. Fox, presiding elder.
1931-1933—W. R. Kelly, pastor; E. W. Fox, presiding elder.
1933-1935—W. R. Kelly, pastor; P. W. Tucker, presiding elder.
1935-1937—R. G. Tuttle, pastor; P. W. Tucker, presiding elder.
1937-———R. G. Tuttle, pastor; J. W. Moore, presiding elder.

PLEASANT GROVE AS I REMEMBER IT

By A. C. MOORE in

Methodist News Herald, Sept. 25, 1925

It is generally known that Dr. P. H. Grose was the principal founder of Pleasant Grove church. It is said that Dr. Grose came to this county from Lincolnton, N. C., in 1832. He was a member of the Lutheran church but Mrs. Grose was a Methodist and as there were no Lutheran churches in this locality Dr. Grose's interest was centered in the Methodist church. He, with the help of his pastor and others, went to work and erected the first Pleasant Grove church building.

The house was built of forest pine timber most of which was hand hewn about twelve inches wide. The church was 24 x 30 feet in size and was used for church services until 1875.

Dr. and Mrs. Grose were faithful attendants of the church and were pleasant people to associate with. Their influence in the community was a great blessing to young and old. It was said that Mrs. Grose had a place out in the grove near her home where she went daily to pray. Dr. Grose owned and operated a mill and his Christian influence was felt among the customers at his mill.

These are the names of some of the charter members of Pleasant Grove church: Mrs. P. H. Grose, Mr. and Mrs. George Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Basil Bostic, Mr. and Mrs. Andy Eaves, Betsy Hill, Mr. and Mrs. William L. Griffin, Mr. and Mrs. Andy Harmon, Mr. and Mrs. Noah Padgett and Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Padgett. These were indeed a band of faithful Christian workers.

In June, 1869, Rev. V. A. Sharpe held a revival service in the good old log church. It was continued three weeks and was a glorious meeting. A large number of young people and some older ones were converted and restored to the perfect faith in Christ. About forty or fifty members were added to the church. After this revival many new faces were seen in the congregation. Some of the older ones had gone and new ones came in. The following are some of the older members of the congregation: Mr. and Mrs. Hiles Grose, Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Grose, Mr. and Mrs. Andy Hudlow, Mr. and Mrs. Anson Webber, Mr. and Mrs. Noah Padgett, Mr. and Mrs. Mote Carpenter, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Young, Mr. and Mrs. Martin Butler, Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Eaves, Mr. and Mrs. Guilford Eaves, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Moore, Mr. and Mrs. John Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Barney King, Mr. and Mrs. Nile Butler, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Lowrance and Mr. and Mrs. Reinhardt.

It was indeed a pleasure to go to Pleasant Grove and see this group of men seated on an old chestnut log that lay in front of the house or on one that lay by a post oak in the grove. These men would come early

and sit for hours and discuss the current news, their crops and would sometimes tell some jokes. It was a social as well as a religious gathering. When the preacher would arrive at the church and dismount, it would often seem that he could hardly stand, he had ridden so far, and perhaps in the cold. He would hitch his horse, join the group of men, shake hands with every one and then join in the conversation for awhile. Finally he would remind the group that it was time for services and they would all enter the church. The women usually gathered in the church and spent a social hour before the services. After preaching the pastor would go home with some member of the congregation for dinner and then usually ride ten miles or more to reach his next appointment that night.

In 1838 Dr. P. H. Grose bought one acre of land and gave same to the church.

The second church, the framed wood building, was built in 1875. The membership at that time was about one hundred and thirty. The following were members of the building committee: Harrison Grose, Hiles Grose, Martin Butler, John and Frank Moore, and James Young. They, with their pastor and others, built the church.

In 1876 Mote Carpenter bought one-half acre of land and gave it to the church to be used for a cemetery. Mrs. Mote Carpenter was buried in 1876 and was the first one to be laid to rest in the church cemetery. The next bodies to be placed in the cemetery were those of Horace Tucker Royster, John Young and Mrs. Harrison Grose.

It seemed that more interest was shown in the church and that we had more earnest members and preaching during the life of the first two churches than we have now. On our regular preaching days the congregation would often display feeling, shed tears, say "amen," and sometimes shout. The people would go to church when they had to ride in wagons, ox carts, horseback or on foot. They would walk three or four miles to the evening service after working all day.

Some of the revivals in those days would continue for two or three weeks. The services ran as follows: prayer meeting at 10 a. m., preaching at 11, dinner on the grounds, prayer meeting at 1, in the woods, the men on one side and the women on the other, then preaching again at 2 and in the evening. The evening services were usually well attended and much interest shown. An "experience meeting" was held toward the last of the meeting. This day was enjoyable for all. The older people would stand and tell how they had been blessed in the meeting, that they loved God and were on their way to heaven. They would inspire the congregation and most every one would say a word. The young people would tell what the Lord had done for them and every one would feel the love of God in their hearts and would be filled with the spirit of brotherly love.

In 1911, the pastor, Rev. J. F. Moser, called a meeting of the members of the church to see what they thought of erecting a new building.

The approximate membership at that time was two hundred and eighty. They found it necessary to build a new church or repair the old one. They decided to build and the following were elected members of the building committee: J. P. Williamson, S. B. Young, R. C. Ledbetter, J. R. Hardin, G. H. Blanton, J. A. Butler, A. C. Moore and the Rev. J. B. Carpenter. This committee was organized as follows: A. C. Moore, chairman; J. P. Williamson, secretary; G. H. Blanton, treasurer, and Rev. J. B. Carpenter and Rev. J. F. Moser, directors. Messrs. Moser and Carpenter selected the plan and work was started on the new building. With the help of God and the good people the church was completed in about five or six months. It took a great struggle to erect this building and it often seemed that it would never be completed and paid for. The building committee were often discouraged and felt like giving up and then some help would come and they would take new heart. Almost all the members of the church worked and paid well, especially the young people, the boys and girls. The church cost about seven thousand. The people in the nearby towns and communities helped a great deal. The Methodists and Baptists of Forest City helped, also other churches: Tanners Grove, Kistlers Chapel, Rutherfordton, Mt. Hebron, Adaville and Oak Grove. Mr. Pink King, of Shelby, made a nice donation to the building fund. A memorial window was placed in the church by the members for Rev. J. F. Moser, as a token of their appreciation for his help in building the church. Rev. J. B. Carpenter was a great help in the erection of the building.

Following are some of the older members of Pleasant Grove church at the present time: Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Carpenter, Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Williamson, C. L. Moore, W. P. Hardin, Mrs. T. L. Cole, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Carver, Mrs. G. W. Trout, Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Grose, A. L. Owens, Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Moore, Mrs. Sarah Harton, Rev. J. B. Carpenter.

In 1911 Pleasant Grove church bought the Pleasant Grove school house lot from County Superintendent B. H. Bridges and the School Board of which J. F. Flack was a member. At the same time the church bought one acre of land from Joe Robinson for the cemetery. They now own about three and one-half acres of land, registered in 1909 in book 90, page 327.

A home coming or memorial service is held at the church on the first Sunday in May each year. This has been the custom for twenty years or more and is a very interesting and enjoyable occasion for the older members and friends of the church as well as the later members. On May 1, 1925, there were a total of three hundred and sixty-eight graves in the cemetery. On Memorial Day the graves are decorated and it has been said that Pleasant Grove has one of the best, if not the best, kept cemeteries in the county.

PLEASANT GROVE AS I REMEMBER IT

By J. B. CARPENTER

In Methodist News Herald, Sept. 25, 1925

This church is a half-station of Forest City and Pleasant Grove. The present pastor, Brother Ware, is getting up the history of the church, and appointed me as one of the committee as the oldest member of the Methodist church, of the vicinity, and I hereby submit my recollection of the church from 1841 with traditions back.

By common consent, 1838 was the year fixed for the building of the church, which was a log church, and that Dr. Phillip Grose donated the land where the church now stands, and with the neighbors, built the church. It was placed on the Rutherford circuit and was probably one of the twenty-one churches and regularly supplied by the pastors of the circuit from year to year. Who the first members were I cannot tell, but I know the Methodist families, they were Groses, Eaves, Alexanders, Butlers, Daniels and others not recalled.

This church was used to 1875, when it was replaced by a frame church, built in the grove near the church and this church was used to 1911 when it was supplanted by the beautiful brick church that now occupies almost the identical spot of the original church, which is the finest and most complete church in the country, in Rutherford county, surrounded by the descendants of Mr. Phillip Grose, George Moore, the Alexanders, Butlers and many others who have built and moved into the community, and now is a part of Forest City, and known as West End, and is looking forward to the day when they will become an independent station, and the present pastor, Brother Ware, is impressing the people with this early history, and thus encouraging them to come into their own, and take their high place in the Methodist church.

The following persons have been licensed to preach from time to time as members from Pleasant Grove church: Andrew Sullins, James Arthur, who after the burning of the house known as Burnt Chimney, moved to Fingerville, S. C., where he died; Carter Burnett, who was so long a resident of Rutherfordton, and who died suddenly in his office, respected by all and loved by many; Campbell Smith, who was probably a traveling preacher of the South Carolina Conference and located and settled on the railroad between Forest City and Alexander; Allen Hamby, who was traveling preacher and presiding elder, but located and settled in Rutherfordton, and for many years ran a saddle and harness establishment; J. T. Miller, the grandfather of the president of the Citizens Bank (C. L. Miller), I think moved to Lincolnton where he died; Campbell Smith, a son of Campbell Smith, was licensed to preach and joined the Western North Carolina Conference and traveled for two or three years when his health gave away, and he was discontinued; Avery B. Carpenter, who was licensed to preach, moved to Arkansas, where he ran a farm and did supply work from time to time; Everett Eaves, son of Capt. John Eaves, was licensed to preach, and joined the Western North Carolina Conference, and traveled for several years, when he located and went West

and is now a Presbyterian minister; Clarence Butler, a grandson of Martin Butler, who was a working member in the church at Pleasant Grove. I would like to speak of the early members of the church, of which I knew, but perhaps this is not the time or place.

The cemetery of the church was opened in 1876 and Mrs. E. M. Carpenter was the first one buried there, and it has grown, having one Methodist preacher, and the children of two Methodist preachers buried there.

During the years that have passed since 1838, the church has been well supplied with pastors, and had a continual growth, the membership has grown and the other work of the church has gone forward with as little friction as any church I have ever known.

Reviewing the growth of the church I may say that the pastors were ably assisted in the work there by a number of consecrated local preachers: James Arthur, Carter Burnett, Andrew Sullins, Campbell Smith and among a group of local preachers belonging at other churches were: A. Hamby, J. T. Miller, Daniel Johnson, Solomon Daves, Benjamin Hamilton and J. W. Vandiver.

Among the revivals held at that church, the most notable one was the first, held in 1851, the Kistler revival, as it was known, with H. H. Durant, presiding elder, and Paul F. Kistler, pastor, and the records show the admissions: 128 white and 58 colored. Kistler was a strong man and built up the circuit largely and was loved and honored by the people as perhaps few pastors ever were. He took in the deserted portions of the work, and as an illustration, Black's Meeting house near Poors Ford had been given up to the bats and owls but Kistler went over there and had had a good revival and repaired the church and the people recommended that the church be named Kistler's Chapel, and thus we have a "Kistler's Chapel."

The second revival was held in 1869, and was in crop time and followed a quarterly meeting. Sharp announced at the close of the afternoon service that there would be preaching there the next day at 3 o'clock and after dismission the brethren came to Sharp and told him it was impossible to have a congregation for it was in the midst of crop time, and Sharp replied, let those work that have to work, and those that can, let them come the next evening and when the hour came the congregation was nearly equal to the Sunday congregation. The meeting continued for ten days or two weeks, and there were people there, now living, who will say that they made their best crops that year and with the least strain of labor. Old men joined the church, and Sharp's revival will be remembered by many who are now living.

The third revival was held in 1879, with J. S. Nelson, presiding elder, and R. F. Bumpass, pastor in charge. There were about 50 conversions, and 26 joined at Pleasant Grove.

This sketch would not be complete without mention of some of the laymen of the church, among them were: Jacob Lowrance, who lived and died near Forest City, and who was circuit steward for a number of years. Spencer Eaves was a Sunday school superintendent and many others occupied official positions that I do not call to mind.

PROGRAM

SUNDAY, MAY 1st, 1938



10:00 A. M.—Sunday School

10:50 A. M.—Devotional in Cemetery; Decoration of Graves

11:00 A. M.—Memorial Sermon.....Dr. Eugene J. Coltrane
President of Brevard College

12:30 P. M.—Dinner on the Ground.

2:00 P. M.—Devotional

Drama.....“Pleasant Grove Fifty Years Ago”
Directed by Miss Kate Moore

Presentation of Guests and Brief Addresses:

Rev. Charles Trammel.....Troy, N. C.

Rev. Chalmers Grose.....Gastonia, N. C.

(Both of these ministers have been sent out from Pleasant Grove)

Presentation of Awards:

To oldest person present in point of years; to oldest church member in point of continuous membership; to youngest church member and to person traveling greatest number of miles to attend services.

Date Due

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